

Reading Area Water Authority

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS





- Page 1 **Why is my bill so high?**
My water is off?
My water is brown and water pressure is low – why?
I did not receive a bill?
- Page 2 **Can you send the bill to my tenant?**
Can I get the water turned off at my property?
There is water coming in my basement – why?
The cap out side for the water and sewer is missing what should I do?
Can I be put on a payment plan?
Why is my bill higher than my neighbors and they have X amount of people and I live alone?
I need a final read.....
- Page 3 **Can you fax me a copy of my bill?**
Can you tell me if we have a leak?
I think my meter is broke and that is why I have high reads at my property...
Since I got the new meter my bills are so high
Is there a charge for a new meter?
Why am I responsible for a damaged meter and I don't live at the property?
- Page 4 **Why am I paying for a service at my property if the pipes and meter are missing/ or no one lives there?**
My account is with the collection agency; can't I make a payment arrangement with you?
I paid the collection agency, why do I still have a balance?
Can my penalty be waived?
Why did I get a penalty?
Can I have a payment plan on the Tampered Meter Fine?
- Page 5 **Why is my bill being estimated?**
Can you send someone out to my property to look for a leak?
- Page 6 **Why is my sewer bill so high?**





Why is my bill so high?

This commonly asked question could be answered in many different ways. As a consumer you should ask yourself a few questions: Did I have more people staying at this property for the time period of the bill? The water readings and dates can be found on the back of your water bill. Are my faucets in my sinks or tubs dripping? Do I have to shake the handle on my toilet to make it stop running? All of the above questions are direct causes of higher water consumption, which in return will cause a higher bill to be sent to you.

My water is off?

If water is off at a property, first you need to find out if your account has been turned over to the collection agency for the delinquent account balance. If this is the case please contact ARB at 610-378-5000. If you do not have a past due amount, call the RAWA office and we will call our Distribution Department and ask them if they know if anything unusual is going on at the location of the property. If you have received a notice on your door instructing the property to call for a meter change out, and this was not done, your water may be turned off. If none of the above applies, and the weather is cold, it could be that the pipes are frozen and we would then suggest you call a plumber. Please Note: If there is a tampered meter fine that has not been paid and sent to ARB that could also be cause for turn off.

My water is brown and water pressure is low – why?

Call the RAWA Administration Office. Our staff will contact the Distribution Department with the property address and ask if there is a back flush going on or water main break. If either is going on in that area, this would be cause for dirty water or low pressure. If it is a Back Flush – it should clear up in 30 to 60 minutes. If it is a Main Break customer will be instructed as to how to handle the water usage by notice on the property front door. If it is not either of these 2 issues, we will ask the Distribution Department to go out and check the property, they will then let the customer know what is going on after inspection.





I did not receive a bill?

The owner is the only address that we are legally obligated to forward the bill to. If mailing address has changed recently RAWA needs to be notified of this change. If a bill is returned, the RAWA staff is able to note if the bills are being returned by the post office. If this is a newly purchased property we need a copy of the settlement papers from settlement showing the new owner. If none of these explanations pertain to you as the customer, then you can call into the RAWA Administration office to have a balance sheet provided to you however, you would need to fill out a right to know form prior to obtaining the information.

Can you send the bill to my tenant?

RAWA can only send bills to the owner. The owner is the responsible person for the bill. Therefore it is the responsibility of the owner to make sure his/her tenants receive a copy or an amount to pay. If bills can not be provided to tenant in a timely manner the tenant can fill out the Right to Know form and mail, email or fax to the RAWA Administration Office. This process will need to be done each month.

Can I get the water turned off at my property?

If the property is vacant the owner may have the water service turned off at the curb stop. The owner must contact the RAWA Administration Office and receive an application for “voluntary water shut off”. This form must be filled out, notarized and returned to RAWA office along with a \$112.00 turn on/turn off fee. The minimum service charge for the surcharges consisting of the water surcharge, meter surcharge, sewer surcharge and fire (if applicable) would continue to be billed to the owner. Owner may turn the water off at the meter in the property to avoid the water turn on/turn off fee. Please note that no one other than the RAWA Personnel can turn the water off at the curb stop. Violators can be prosecuted.

There is water and sewer coming in my basement – why?

Usually this is a Sewer issue and you should contact the sewer department of the City of Reading at 610-655-6008 or the Service Center 1-877-727-3234 and someone will be dispatched to your location.





The cap out side for the water and sewer is missing what should I do?

It is owner responsibility to maintain the missing water or sewer caps located on your property. To replace, you will need to contact a supply company to purchase a new one. You will need to know which one you are looking for which when you make your purchase. There are (2) two separate sewer boxes at the curb, one is vented and the other is not. Water and gas boxes are smaller in diameter than the sewer boxes. If you have a question regarding which cap is missing you may call the RAWA Distribution Department at 610-655-6254 to verify.

Can I be put on a payment plan?

Depending on the situation and the amount of past due bills that are involved is the deciding factor. If the customer is in collections the answer is no. The customer must be in good standings. If the bill's were very high for a month being more than double normal usage, then a 3 month plan could be approved, and it will continue to receive late charge penalties on unpaid balances. If the customer was estimated in their bills for more than 6 months, we can then offer a payment plan free of penalties for the total number of months estimated plus 6 months. You will need to sign an agreement with the RAWA along with a down payment in the amount of 1/3 of the total bill. This amount will need to be made or the agreement is null and void. This can be mailed, faxed or emailed into the RAWA Administration Office. The agreement will not go into effect until the agreement has been signed and received along with the deposit check.

Why is my bill higher than my neighbors and they have X amount of people and I live alone?

Customers cannot compare their bills to that of their neighbors. Each property uses water in different ways. Your water/sewer bill is based on the water consumption that is located on the rear of your water/sewer bill.

I need a final read....

If the customer is selling their home and need a certification from our office the title company, lawyer and or/realtor that the customer is dealing with are the only persons whom can make this request by submitting the form that has been supplied to them previously as well as a check in the amount of \$35.00 made out to RAWA. This must be requested 10 days in advance of settlement dates.





Can you fax me a copy of my bill?

We cannot fax anything to a customer with out a “Right to Know Form” filled out and submitted to the RAWA. At this time, RAWA can not reproduce bills. We can how ever fax, mail or email a balance sheet. This again has to be requested by the customer filling out the “Right to Know” form.

Can you tell me if we have a leak?

With our new meters we are able to detect if there was consecutive usage at the property by the dates the excess consumption started and when the excess consumption ended. The new Master Meters have the ability to produce reports for us to share with the property owner to show them times and dates of continual usage (currently only in district 2 and 4). The Neptune Radio Devices (also known as an E-coder meter) have a report that RAWA can run each month and at the request of a customer. Per your request, the RAWA Administration can locate the property address and read the report to see if there was consecutive usage at the property and when this started. The older Neptune meters that do not have a radio device attached, do not have either of these abilities and if the customer is encountering high usage RAWA Administration would send a technician to the property to replace the meter with an E-Coder (radio) device. Depending on the districts in question is the basis of which radio meter would be installed.

I think my meter is broke and that is why I have high reads at my property....

When meters start to age they run slower – the meters will never run fast and slow and fast again cause higher usage. The only way to have higher usage is to have water pulled thru the meter. How this occurs is by either more consumption or consecutive usage at the property which is causing the higher consumption.

Since I got the new meter my bills are so high.

The meters that are being installed are more accurate than an older meter. Older meters tend to run slow. If this was the case previously, the RAWA will not charge for past consumption that was not recorded. At the time of the change out a final meter reading is taken and the new meter start amount is recorded.





Is there a charge for a new Meter?

There is no charge for a new meter to be installed at the property (for meters up to 1 ½ “, larger meters are owner responsibility) **unless the old meter has been damaged or is missing**. If this is the case, there is a \$560 meter tampering fine that is due.

Why am I responsible for a damaged meter fine if I don't live at this property?

The home owner is responsible for the meter at the property. RAWA does not bill tenants for damaged meters.

Why am I paying for service at my property if the pipes and meter are missing and no one lives there?

Unless the properties water lines have been abandoned by the RAWA, the abandonment fee has been paid and all delinquent balances are paid in full, you will continue to receive a bill for the service charges. As long as there are lines going to the property and it is available to have the service then the fee is due each month.

My account is with the collection agency; can't I make a payment arrangement with you?

Once the customer has been sent to collections they must contact the collection agency directly at 610-378-5000. RAWA Administration will not make any payment arrangements or decisions on the balances once it has been turned over to their office.

I paid the collection agency, why do I still have a balance?

RAWA Administration turns over to the collection agency monthly files of customers with past due balances of over 60 days past due. There will always be a balance due to RAWA after collections has been paid. Payment is applied to the most delinquent portion of the bill first (collections amount). Payments can not be applied to the current amount until Collections is paid in full. The customers need to realize that once the collections balance is paid they need to quickly bring the RAWA balance also up to date so that it stays out of collections.





Can my penalty be waived?

As a one time courtesy our office may waive a penalty to a customer in good standing. Customers cannot be past due on their previous month's bills or in collections. This is determined on a bill to bill basis.

Why did I get a penalty on my bill?

All payments are due on the last day of each month or a 10% penalty is added to any unpaid balances. There is no grace period.

Can I have a payment plan on the Tampered Meter Fine?

There is no payment arrangements made for this type bill. The owner has 30 days from the first letter to pay the bill in full, a second letter is sent and an additional 30 days is given as a courtesy – but at 61 days the balance that is remaining on the bill is sent to the collection agency and a 25% fee is added, along with the risk of the water being turned off.

Why is my bill being estimated?

There could be many different reasons that the bill is being estimated. The first thing you would want to do is determine if you are being estimated by turning your bill over and looking on the back of the bill and see if the reading is being estimated. It is possible that the meter is damaged or the out side black box is not properly picking up the meter read from inside the home. At this point we would ask the owner to call the RAWA office with a good time and date that we would come out and inspect the meter and get an actual read. Please note that the meter readers can not determine if the reading is estimated or actual by receiving the meter readings. This is not done until the devices used to obtain the meter readings are loaded into the computer system.

Can you send someone out to my property to look for a leak?

RAWA does not check properties for leaks. It is the responsibility of the home owner to call a licensed plumber in the City of Reading to check for leaks.





Why is my sewer bill so high?

The sewer portion of the bill is calculated by the actual consumption of the water at the property. Any questions about pricing or amounts owed for the sewer should be directed to the sewer department at the City of Reading Citizens Services Center at 1-877-727-3234.

